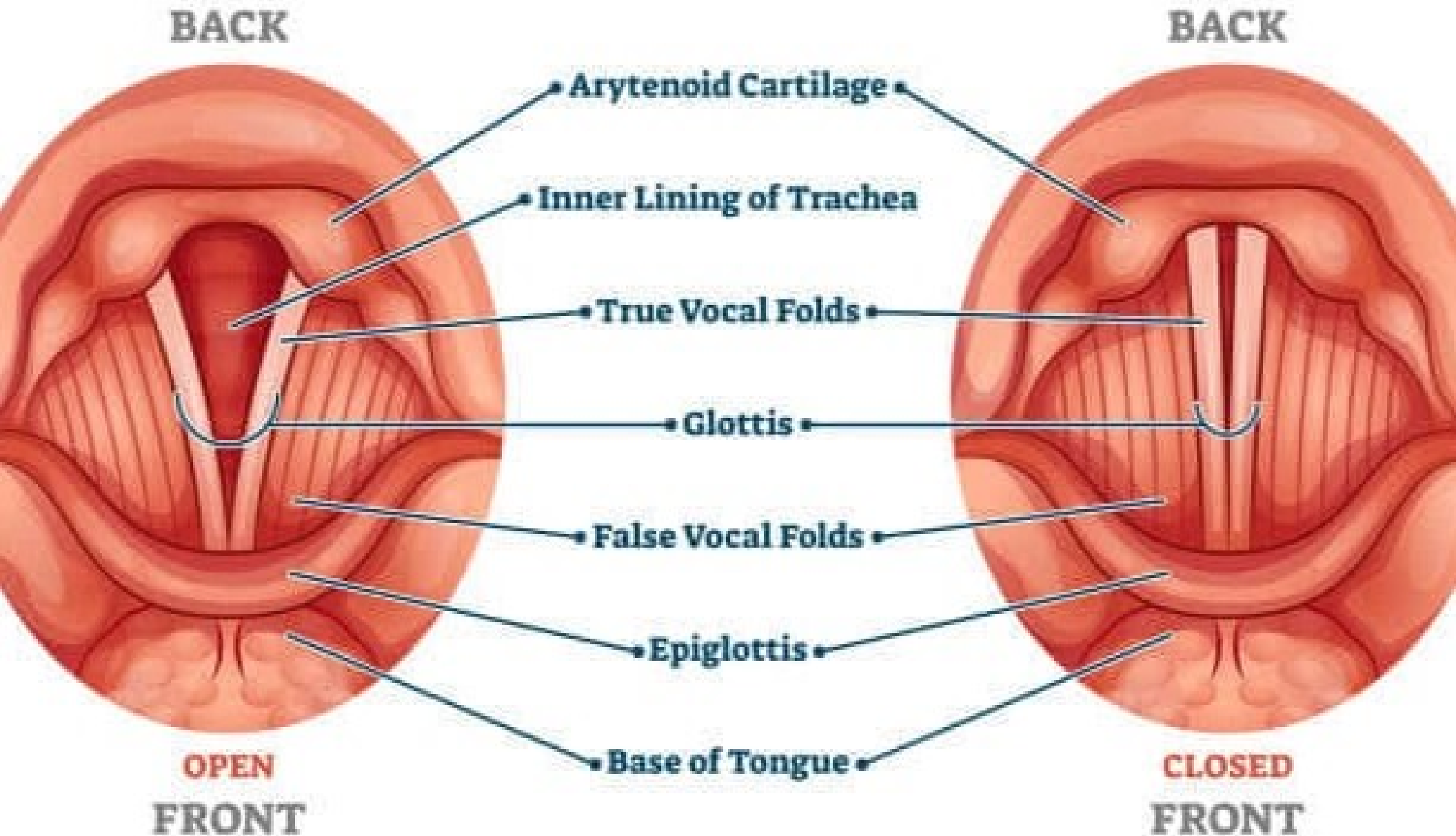


VOICE
ART

The sound of your voice is produced by vibration of the vocal folds, which are two bands of smooth muscle tissue that are positioned opposite to each other in the larynx.

When you are not speaking, the vocal folds are open so that you can breathe. The quality of your voice (pitch, volume, and tone) is determined by several parameters of your voice. This is why people's voices sound so different from one another.

VOCAL CORDS



Many people use their voices for their work. Singers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, sales people, and public speakers are among those who make great demands on their voices. This puts them at risk for developing voice problems.

In the pediatric population, the reported prevalence of a voice disorder has ranged from 1.4% to 6.0% (2015). An estimated range of 41%–73% of children were identified with vocal nodules, indicating vocal nodules as a predominant cause of pediatric Dysphonia (2015).

Approximately one out of 13 adults will experience a voice problem annually, but only a few seek treatment (2014). The rate of young adults (aged 24–34 years) with voice disorders was estimated to be 6% (2017). Prevalence was reported to be higher in adults aged 60 years and older (2014).

Some of these disorders can be avoided by taking care of your voice. If you think you have a voice problem, consult An ent specialist also known as otolaryngologist. Your otolaryngologist may refer you to a speech-language pathologist. A speech-language pathologist can help you improve the way you use your voice.



Voice disorders may improve due to several causes including organic, functional, and/or psychogenic causes. Organic causes include structural (vocal fold abnormalities such as vocal nodules, cysts, or polyps, Laryngitis, chemical exposure, external trauma and so on.

Neurologic causes may include such as laryngeal nerve paralysis, Parkinson's disease, etc.

Functional causes include such as yelling, screaming, excessive throat clearing/coughing, speaking in too high or too low pitch, vocal fatigue due to effort, overuse.

Psychogenic causes include conditions such as chronic stress disorders, anxiety, depression and so on.

Most voice problems can be reversed by treating the underlying cause or through a range of behavioural and surgical treatments.

Healthy habits
to take care of
your voice

- Drink plenty of water, especially when exercising.
- If you drink caffeinated beverages or alcohol, balance your intake with plenty of water.
- Take vocal naps - rest your voice throughout the day.
- Avoid or limit use of medications that may dry out the vocal folds, including some common cold and allergy medications. If you have voice problems, ask your doctor which medications would be safest for you to use.

- Don't smoke. Smoke irritates the vocal folds. Also, cancer of the vocal folds is seen most often in individuals who smoke.
- Avoid eating spicy foods. Spicy foods can cause stomach acid to move into the throat or esophagus, causing heartburn or GERD.
- Include plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables in your diet. These foods contain vitamins A, E, and C.
- Get enough rest. Physical fatigue has a negative effect on voice.

- Exercise regularly. Exercise increases stamina and muscle tone. This helps provide good posture and breathing, which are necessary for proper speaking.
- Avoid mouthwash or gargles that contain alcohol or irritating chemicals.

- Try not to overuse your voice. Avoid speaking or singing when your voice is hoarse or tired.
- Rest your voice when you are sick. Illness puts extra stress on your voice.
- Avoid using the extremes of your vocal range, such as screaming or whispering. Talking too loudly and too softly can both stress your voice.
- Practice good breathing techniques when singing or talking. Singers and speakers are often taught exercises that improve this kind of breath control. Talking from the throat, without supporting breath, puts a great strain on the voice.

- Avoid cradling the phone when talking. Cradling the phone between the head and shoulder for extended periods of time can cause muscle tension in the neck.
- Consider using a microphone when appropriate. In relatively static environments such as exhibit areas, classrooms, or exercise rooms, a lightweight microphone and an amplifier-speaker system can be of great help.
- Avoid talking in noisy places. Trying to talk above noise causes strain on the voice.

Consider voice therapy. A Speech-Language Pathologist who is experienced in treating voice problems can teach you how to use your voice in a healthy way.